



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/590,010	08/21/2006	Kenji Tamada	070456-0142	7077
20277 7590 12/15/2009 MCDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP 600 13TH STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20005-3096			EXAMINER KRAUSE, JUSTIN MITCHELL	
			ART UNIT 3656	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 12/15/2009	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/590,010	Applicant(s) TAMADA ET AL.	
	Examiner JUSTIN KRAUSE	Art Unit 3656	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 November 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 23, 2009 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 8, and 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jahn (US Patent 3,240,542) in view of Ikezawa et al (US Patent 5,630,668).

Jahn discloses a thrust needle bearing employing lubricating oil (col. 2, line 69) and having a rolling element (3) held by a cage (4) and rolling on a race (a roller thrust bearing, by definition, operates between a pair of races in order to bear a thrust load) wherein, the cage has a cage pocket (2), in which the rolling element is stored to come in contact with a pocket guide face (6, 6a, 7) thereof constituted by a shear plane

Art Unit: 3656

formed through pressing the cage pocket (col. 1, lines 35-39), and a clearance (col. 2, lines 56-58) between the pocket guide face of the cage and the rolling element.

Jahn does not disclose a specific clearance dimension, however does disclose the guide surfaces being provided with faces which are closely spaced from the roller (col. 2, lines 56-58) and a clearance be set, "so as to facilitate the entry of wedge-shaped layers of lubricant between the roller and its guide surfaces" (Col. 2, lines 68-69). Therefore, the clearance required to facilitate the entry of wedge-shaped layers of lubricant is a result dependant variable which is determined based upon the oil selected and the desired lubricating properties.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Jahn, through the use of routine methods of experimentation and select a clearance range of 60 to 130 micrometers between the pocket guide face and roller for the desired purpose of allowing for a lubricating wedge of lubricant which achieves the desired lubricating characteristics, dependent on the type of lubricant selected, the desired lubricating characteristics and the operational parameters (speed, temperature, etc...) of the bearing device.

Jahn does not disclose a value of the arithmetic average roughness Ra of the rolling element coming into contact with the shear plane to be at least 0.03-0.15 micrometers.

Ikezawa teaches a thrust needle bearing employing lubricating oil having a rolling element (NR) held by a cage (see Fig. 2, for example) and on a rolling race (49,

Art Unit: 3656

50, see figure 7, for example), wherein the value of the arithmetic average roughness Ra of the rolling element contacting the cage is set to at least .03 micrometers and at most .15 micrometers (see claim 7) for the purpose of decreasing friction and reducing wear.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Jahn to include a rolling element having an arithmetic average roughness Ra set below 0.05 micrometers for the purpose of decreasing friction and reducing wear as taught by Ikezawa.

Regarding claims 2 and 3, Claim 7 of Ikezawa discloses that at least one of the cage, the race and the roller has a roughness of .05 Ra or less, satisfying the claimed ranges.

Regarding claims 4 and 5, the incorporation of the bearing into a particular device or environment is not itself patentable. The structure of the device is the same as disclosed, and may be placed into any environment. See MPEP 2114.

Ikezawa explicitly discloses the bearing is for use in an air conditioner compressor (col. 1, line 21), and the device is also capable of being incorporated into any other device, including an automatic transmission.

Claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jahn (US Patent 3,240,542).

Jahn discloses a thrust needle bearing employing lubricating oil (col. 2, line 69) and having a rolling element (3) held by a cage (4) and rolling on a race (a roller thrust bearing, by definition, operates between a pair of races in order to bear a thrust load) wherein, the cage has a cage pocket (2), in which the rolling element is stored to come in contact with a pocket guide face (6, 6a) thereof constituted by a shear plane formed through pressing the cage pocket (col. 1, lines 35-39), and a clearance (col. 2, lines 56-58) between the pocket guide face of the cage and the rolling element.

Jahn does not disclose a specific clearance dimension, however does disclose the guide surfaces being provided with faces which are closely spaced from the roller (col. 2, lines 56-58) and a clearance be set, "so as to facilitate the entry of wedge-shaped layers of lubricant between the roller and its guide surfaces" (Col. 2, lines 68-69). Therefore, the clearance required to facilitate the entry of wedge-shaped layers of lubricant is a result dependant variable which is determined based upon the oil selected and the desired lubricating properties.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Jahn, through the use of routine methods of experimentation and select a clearance range of 60 to 130 micrometers between the pocket guide face and roller for the desired purpose of allowing for a lubricating wedge of lubricant which achieves the desired lubricating characteristics, dependent on the type of lubricant selected, the desired lubricating characteristics and the operational parameters (speed, temperature, etc...) of the bearing device.

Regarding claim 7, the cage has a radial section with a shape of a square wave rising and falling in the form of a square between a first level and a second level different from each other in height,

said cage has a portion of said first level at a location corresponding to a radial central portion of said rolling element, and said portion of said first level has a first convex portion which can be contacted with a circumferential surface of said radial central portion of said rolling element,

said cage has portions of said second level at locations respectively corresponding to an inner circumferential side and an outer circumferential side of said radial central portion of said rolling element, and said portions of said second level have second convex portions which can be respectively contacted with end surfaces of the inner and circumferential side of said rolling element (see fig. 5).

Regarding claims 9 and 10, the incorporation of the bearing into a particular device or environment is not itself patentable. The claims recite no particulars of the structure of the combination, the bearing of Jahn is capable of being incorporated into any device and bringing with it all the advantages of the improved bearing design. See MPEP 2114.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed April 23, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2-10 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection to the extent the arguments are related to the Pitner reference.

With regard to applicant's argument of unexpected results, applicant's argument is insufficient to establish unexpected results as applicant has not made a showing that the associated comparison has been made with respect to the closest prior art. See MPEP 716.02(e) [R-2]. Further Applicant's data in Table 3 and 4 compares various roughness values against a clearance, and compares various clearances against a roughness. The tables show evidence of routine experimentation to optimize a variable to achieve desired results, not of any unexpected result. It is within the level of skill in the art to optimize variables to achieve desired characteristics. "[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation." *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JUSTIN KRAUSE whose telephone number is (571)272-3012. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Ridley can be reached on 571-272-6917. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Justin Krause/
Examiner, Art Unit 3656